For specific activities, such as the coordination and facilitation provided by the Indian consulate in Jeddah for the travel and stay of Indian Haj pilgrims, the Post is granted special permission every year to locally hire additional hands during the Haj season.

Proposal to abolish import duty on Ferro-Nickel

449. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to abolish the import duty on ferro-nickel to increase the import of ferro-nickel so that the domestic stainless steel production would be increased;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a).

(c) All ferro-alloys including ferro-nickel already enjoy a concessional rate of basic customs duty of 5% as against the peak rate for industrial goods of 10%. Steel production is a function of several factors such as demand, prices, domestic capacity etc. and is not determined by imports of ferro-nickel alone.

Sectors affected by global recession

†450. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the areas of which pace of development has been affected by global recession and upto what extent;

(b) the areas in which proposed investments may be required to change comprehensively in order to keep the pace of complete development in this Five Year Plan; and

(c) assistance which would be required for the purpose from outside?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The global slowdown has impacted the growth of the domestic economy. As per the Advance Estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) released by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the growth in real GDP for 2008-09 is placed at 7.1 per cent, as compared with 9.0 per cent in 2007-08. The estimated growth in 2008-09 is composed of growth of 2.6 per cent in Agriculture and allied sectors, 4.8 per cent in Industry and 9.6 per cent in Services as compared to a growth of 4.9 percent, 8.1 percent and 10.9 percent in 2007-08.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan envisaged an annual average real growth of 9 percent comprising an average per annum growth of 4 per cent in Agriculture, 10 to 11 per cent in

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.